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February 9, 2023

Department of Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

RE: Department of Finance Pre-Budget Public Consultation

Dear Deputy Prime Minister Freeland,

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) represents museums across Nova Scotia, including national, community, and provincially managed museums. We are writing to you on behalf of our 115 member museums in response to the call for pre-budget consultation. Museums in Nova Scotia, like in all of Canada, are in dire need of increased funding from the 2023-24 federal budget.

Request for Budget 2023-24

- Increase to funding to **Young Canada Works Program** administered by the Canadian Museums Association. Many museums in Nova Scotia rely on this program to provide meaningful employ to students, especially in rural parts of Nova Scotia. Without these students many museums will be unable to open, thus reducing tourism and economic opportunities from their communities.
- Increased funding to **Museum Assistance Program** administered by Canadian Heritage. Museums and organizations like the Association of Nova Scotia Museums rely on this funding for important projects. For example, in 2022 ANSM was able to hold 9 meetings across the province in Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, Gaelic, and Acadian communities to discuss how community museums make reconnect collection that originate in these communities with their communities of origin. We will not be able to continue this work if we are not successful with a Museum Assistance Program grant.
- Increased funding to **Canadian Museums Association** for the implementation of their **"Moved to Action" Report, which will help museums actively respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Report**. Museums are actively working on decolonizing their work but require support and guidance from organizations like the Canadian Museums Association.
- **Operational funding prioritized over project funding**. Any support that can be provided to museums that supports their mandate, rather than projects is of priority. Many museums are struggling to keep their lights on and thus are not able to take on extra projects like those supported by the Museums Assistance Program and Canadian Museums Association.

Why Fund Museums?

Government support to museums makes up only a portion of museums' operating budgets, but this portion is key to a museum's financial sustainability. Funding is leveraged in other grants and projects. It also empowers museums to generate revenue through admissions, retail sales, and events.

Museums help Government address many important concerns, including:

- **Job Opportunities.** Over 800 Nova Scotians are employed in the museum sector.
- **Economic drivers, especially in the tourism industry.** Museums are attractions and also act as visitor information centers and community navigators, especially in rural NS.
- **Health Benefits.** Museums provide mental and public health benefits, including recreation spaces, such as walking trails. They also help attract professionals such as health care professionals.
- **Social Well-being of Seniors and Older Adults.** Over 2,700 Nova Scotians volunteer with museums, many of these are seniors.
- **Recruit and retain people in rural Nova Scotia.** Museums encourage people to make rural Nova Scotia their home. Museum staff and their families volunteer, shop, live, and recreate in their community.
- **Improving EDIA by sharing Nova Scotia's complex history.** Museums are helping Canadians understand and contextualize our rich history.

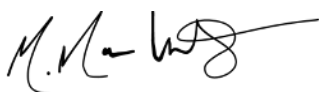
What will happen without increased government support – 2023 ANSM Member Survey

Nova Scotia's museums find themselves at a critical impasse. In January 2023 ANSM conducted a survey with member museums. The survey results show an industry struggling to keep lights on but continuing to work towards excellence. This survey reflects similar results to a national survey led by Heritage Canada across Canada in preparation for the National Museum Strategy.

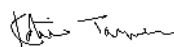
- **Staffing and Volunteer Crisis.** Museums are struggling to recruit and retain staff and volunteers. The survey indicated only 40% of museums in NS have at least 1 staff who is paid a living wage. In the next five years, museums anticipate losing on average 52% of their staff and volunteers due to burnout, retirement, layoffs, or personal factors.
- **Reduction in Offerings.** When asked, if funding is not increased, what results do you anticipate in the next year, 61% of respondents said they will reduce operating hours. 63% said they will reduce hiring and/or cut existing staff. 50% said that they will reduce programming. 61% said their ability to respond to community needs would be negatively impacted.
- **Return to 2019 Visitation.** 41% of museums indicate they have returned to or increased visitation from 2019. The 2019 NS Visitor Exit Survey showed approximately 10% of visitors to NS visit a museum or historic site. Museums are working hard to meet public needs through special events, school programs, new exhibits, and rich collections. This return to success will be delayed when museums are struggling to keep their lights on and doors open.

ANSM hopes supporting museums, which in turn supports Nova Scotians, is a priority in the 2023-24 federal budget. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Maggie MacIntyre, Executive Director, director@ansm.ns.ca

Thank you for your consideration.



Maggie MacIntyre
Executive Director



Katie Tanner
President